

an intake portion releasably connected to the vacuum cleaner body such that the intake stage forms an airtight seal with the vacuum body;

the vacuum cleaner having an intake opening, an exhaust portion, and a filtration system disposed there between to filter contaminated air drawn through the intake opening, the filtration system including:

a first passive stage to filter out airborne particles above a predetermined size, an active stage including at least one agent effective to kill ambient biological contaminants, and

a second passive stage for removing odors and hazardous chemical agents, wherein the first passive stage is sandwiched between the active stage and the second passive stage to form an integral filter.

--3. (Amended) A hand-held vacuum cleaner in accordance with claim 1, wherein the agent in the active stage is clorohexdine, ethanol, lysostaphin, benzoic acid analog, lysine enzyme and metal salt, bacitracin, methicillin, cephalosporin, polymyxin, cefaclor, Cefadroxil, cefamandole nafate, cefazolin, cefime, cefinetazole, cefonioid, cefoperazone, ceforanide, cefotanme, cefotaxime, cefotetan, cefoxitin, cefpodoxime proxetil, ceftaxidime, ceftizomxime, ceftrizxone, cefriaxone moxalactam, cefuroxime, cephalixin, cephalosporin C, cephalosporin C sodium salt, cephalothin, cephalothin sodium salt, cephapirin, cephradine, cefuroximeaxetil, dihydratecephaloghin, moxalactam, or loracarbef mafate.

--6. (Amended) A vacuum cleaner in accordance with claim 5 wherein the metallic agent is silver, zinc, titanium, or copper mesh.

--10. (Amended) A vacuum cleaner in accordance with claim 2, wherein the active ingredient is in the form of a particulate, a tablet, a tape, a mesh, a solid containing the active ingredient, or a fabric containing the active ingredient.

--11. (Amended) A filtration unit comprising:  
a first passive stage for filtering out particles above a predetermined size,  
an active stage containing at least one agent to kill ambient bacteria and viruses, and  
a second passive stage for removing odors and hazardous chemical agents, wherein the first passive stage is sandwiched between the active stage and the second passive stage to form an integral filter;  
an intake port permitting contaminated air to enter into the filtration unit; and  
an exhalation port through which decontaminated air may be expelled.

--12. (Amended) A filtration unit in accordance with claim 11, wherein the second passive stage includes an activated charcoal agent.

--14. (Amended) A filtration unit in accordance with claim 11, wherein the agent in the active stage is chlorhexidine, ethanol, lysostaphin, benzoic acid analog thereof, lysine enzyme, bacitracin, methicillin, cephalosporin, polymyxin, cefaclor, Cefadroxil, cefamandole nafate, cefazolin, cefixime, cefinetazole, cefoniod, cefoperazone, ceforanide, cefotanme, cefotaxime, cefotetan, cefoxitin, cefpodoxime proxetil, ceftaxidime, ceftizoxime, ceftriaxone, ceftriaxone moxalactam, cefuroxime, cephalixin,

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cephalosporin C, cephalosporin C sodium salt, cephalothin, cephalothin sodium salt, cephalapirin, cepharadine, cefuroximeaxetil, dihydratecephalothin, moxalactam, or loracarbef mafate.

--17. (Amended) A filtration unit in accordance with claim 16, wherein the metallic agent is in the form of a mesh and is silver, zinc, titanium, copper, or iron oxide.

--21. (Amended) A filtration unit in accordance with claim 13, wherein the active ingredient is in the form of a particulate, a tablet, a tape, a mesh, a solid containing the active ingredient, or a fabric containing the active ingredient.--